

# Fishing for Leave bests Geldof's motley crew

Earlier this year, the Campaign for Independent Britain published a booklet by John Ashworth of Restore Britain's Fish entitled The Betrayal of Britain's Fishing to the European Union. It was based on a series of articles which appeared on our website a couple of months earlier.

John, who spent his entire working life in the fishing industry, has been advising the Fishing for Leave group, who were organising a big demonstration to highlight the damage which the EU's Common Fisheries Policy has done to our fishing industry. Yesterday was their big day. A flotilla of fishing boats from several parts of the UK assembled at Southend at 5AM to sail up the Thames. They arrived at Tower Bridge (which had to be raised to accommodate some of the larger larger Scottish vessels) at 10AM. It was a very moving moment when the fishing boats appeared, some of which had travelled hundreds of miles to make their point about how the iniquitous CFP has damaged their livelihood.

After mooring the larger boats by HMS Belfast, seven smaller boats, headed by a contingent from Ramsgate, sailed off via London Bridge to Westminster to make their protest outside the Houses of Parliament. Their presence would have made David Cameron's statement at Prime Minister's Question Time (which was going on at the time) that the UK's fishing industry was "much better off today than it was five years ago" ring very hollow.

There was a good crowd on London Bridge as the boats sailed past while Westminster Bridge had something of a carnival atmosphere as hundreds of people jammed the pavement to show their support for our fishermen. John had travelled down from his home in Yorkshire with a suitcase full copies of the

booklet, which were all received gladly, both by passers-by and fishermen's groups who were part of the crowd. As an East Sussex resident, I was particularly pleased to meet a group of Hastings fishermen who enthusiastically accepted a few copies to take back with them. "This booklet will make you very angry," I warned them!

Besides the UK press, a considerable number of foreign radio and TV stations were present. Arron Brown, the Scottish fisherman who had organised the event, was inundated with request for interviews and John Ashworth was interviewed by TV channels from Sweden, France and Russia. Danish and Polish press teams were also present. They would all have come away under no illusions about our passion to leave the EU and in particular, the depth of support we feel for our fishermen.

Of course, those of us watching from the shoreline were only partly aware of the shenanigans going on with Bob Geldof's pro-remain counter-demonstration. Even as the first boats passed under Tower Bridge, a few little dinghies flying their "in" flags could be seen bobbing around between the fishing boats. I can't claim to be unbiased, but they really looked pathetic. Quite frankly, it was an insult to people who work so hard for their living in very adverse conditions. I had the chance to spend a few minutes on board one of the larger vessels which had come down from the North East of Scotland and was made very welcome by the crew, but even without being given a full conducted tour of the boat, it was obvious that this was no luxury craft as far as accommodation was concerned.

The showdown between Geldof's boat and that carrying Nigel Farage and Kate Hoey likewise did nothing to enhance the "remain" cause. One could not but consider the white flags they waved saying "In" looked like a flag of surrender. I couldn't make out what the cacophony blasted out from his vessel was all about. Only by reading the press coverage of the event afterwards did I discover that it was a 1960s song

which I had never heard of, entitled “In with the In Crowd” and quite frankly, I don’t think from what I heard yesterday that my previous ignorance about this musical masterpiece has been any great loss.

A correspondent informed me this morning that the skipper of the vessel which Geldof hired may face prosecution. Certainly, their behaviour, in particular making rude gestures at Mr Farage, won them few friends. Owen Bennett, a reporter who saw things close at hand, reported that *“One man on a fishing boat was almost shaking with anger as he shouted across to us how the quota system was destroying his industry. He didn’t want to be lectured by Geldof, who seemed more intent on calling Nigel Farage a w\*\*\*\*\* than expressing a genuine interest in the fishing industry.”*

And this is what has wrong-footed the Remain campaign. Geldof and the like fail to appreciate that, in John Mills’ words, “The EU may work for the metropolitan élite – but it doesn’t for most working people.” Our fishermen yesterday illustrated this truth in a particularly graphic and moving way. It was a privilege to have been there to support them.

The report of yesterday’s events on the Fishing for Leave website is well worth reading.

**The Clyde demonstration planned for this morning has been cancelled as a mark of respect for the murdered MP Jo Cox. Fishing For Leave has stated on its website that it was not in the interest of public**

safety to proceed with the protest in the Clyde following 'viable threats' from Remain campaigners who claimed there would be "Armageddon" at the demonstration.